



State of Louisiana
Office of the Governor
GOVERNOR BOBBY JINDAL

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Gov. Jindal Asks Army Corps to Release Map Outlining Impact of Possible Opening of Morganza Spillway, Says State Continues to Prepare for Flooding

BATON ROUGE - Today, Governor Bobby Jindal held a UCG meeting today with state leaders, the National Weather Service and the Army Corps of Engineers to discuss preparations for rising Mississippi River levels. The Governor said he asked the Army Corps to publicly release a map outlining the areas and residents that would be impacted by the possible opening of the Morganza Spillway, which the Corps said could be opened as soon as next Thursday.

Governor Jindal said, "The Corps showed us today a map of the area that would be impacted by the opening of the Morganza Spillway and we encouraged them to release this to the public to give people time to leave that area and make plans to stay somewhere else. They told us the decision to open the spillway could be made by next Thursday, which would give us the early part of next week to make sure and get the word out to residents that they need to leave the area impacted by the possible opening of the spillway.

"To give you an order of magnitude for the rising river levels, a Corps official with us yesterday in North Louisiana said that it could be as late as July before the water returns to normal levels following the crest point. We also asked for a model of backwater flooding as well, in addition to the flooding they project from the opening of the Morganza Spillway.

"As we said yesterday, if the spillway is opened, DOTD will close the portion of La. 1 that crosses the Morganza Spillway and perform an inspection of the structure prior to allowing traffic to flow again. Additionally, based on the potential opening of the spillway, the U.S. 190 Morganza Spillway Bridge repair project is on hold and the mats placed for equipment to access the work site are being removed from the floodway."

LANG Update

Along with the parishes LANG deployed to yesterday, today, they are deploying teams to an additional 11 Parishes. These additional liaison (2-member) teams will support parishes threatened by backwater flooding and the potential opening of the Morganza Spillway. Yesterday, LANG deployed to West Carroll, East Carroll, Madison, Tensas, Concordia parishes. Today, LANG deployed to Assumption, Avoyelles, Catahoula, Iberia, Iberville, LaSalle, Point Coupee, St. Landry, St. Martin, St. Mary, and Terrebonne;

In preparation for the potential opening of the Morganza Spillway, this morning LANG conducted a planning session in conjunction with the Louisiana State Police, Department of Wildlife and Fisheries and the Corps of Engineers to analyze the actions that must be taken to prepare for and respond to the potential opening of the Morganza Spillway. This includes possible “door-to-door” searches, assistance with evacuation, and security of evacuated areas, if the Corps decides to open the spillway. They estimate it will take three days to evacuate people fully from the area of potential impact.

The LANG flood response force in northwest Louisiana continues to support threatened parishes and the 5th Levee District in monitoring levees, distributing equipment, and fortifying levees. In addition to the 20-man teams deployed, LANG has the following equipment assisting parishes and levee district efforts: 15 Hummers, 17 High Water Vehicles, 16 All-Terrain Vehicles (M-Gator), and 6 flat bottom boats.

Yesterday, LANG deployed two Palletized Load System (PLS) Racks to the 5th Levee District to support rapid movement of configured loads of all classes of supply, shelters and containers. Today, LANG is deploying the 3rd PLS racks to support parish efforts in fortifying sand boils.

ANGOLA Update

The Governor said he will visit Angola later today to meet with law enforcement and the Department of Corrections in order to review their evacuation plans. He said, “We know DOC has a three-phase evacuation plan for Angola, the first phase of which would be for those inmates that require medical attention, and we want to ensure that the department has everything they need in the event further evacuations are needed. The department is also preparing to assist Sheriffs’ Offices in the event that they need to evacuate prisoners from a flooded area.”

LANG currently has the following equipment deployed in support of Department of Corrections at Angola: 5 Dump Trucks, 1 Front End Loader, Rough Terrain Fork Lifts, 125 Tents, 1,500 Cots from DCFS.

DOC Update

DOC Secretary Jimmy Le Blanc sent a letter yesterday to the Louisiana District Attorneys Association and Louisiana Supreme Court Chief Justice Kitty Kimball requesting a continuance on all scheduled court cases for offenders from Monday, May 9, 2011 through June 17, 2011. This will free up extra correctional officers for offender evacuations from Louisiana State Penitentiary as well as temporary housing of these offenders at other state correctional facilities. Today, DOC Secretary Le Blanc will meet in Vidalia with Sheriffs from parishes that are vulnerable to Mississippi River flooding to discuss plans for potential evacuation and housing should local facilities be impacted.

DOTD Update

Eight DOTD staff members have been reassigned to assist levee districts and the US Army Corps of Engineers in the 24-hour operation of levee inspections from the Arkansas line to the Old River Control Center in Lettsworth, La. They will begin inspections today.

DOTD has also ordered an additional 18,000 linear feet of Hesco baskets to place in reserve should the state need them. The shipment of baskets should be received by the weekend.

In Tensas Parish – La. 3078 is closed due to flooding on the riverside of the levee. In Madison Parish – DOTD is providing 50 barricades to Madison Parish. In Iberville Parish, based on predicted Mississippi River levels, the White Castle Ferry could close as early as Monday, May 9th. DOTD advises commuters to visit 511la.org for updated travel information.

In Jefferson/Orleans/St. Bernard Parish, the LA 18 drainage improvement project has been put on hold and will resume when river level lowers to 11 feet at the Carrollton gauge. Additionally, projects related to repairs on the Crescent City Connection Bridge and the repairs to the Chalmette Ferry Landing have been put on hold, pending the recession of water levels. DOTD is also working with the US Coast Guard to monitor bridges and river traffic.

DCFS Update

DCFS is preparing resources for the Corps' possible decision to open the Morganza Spillway. Governor Jindal said, "We know this decision could impact residents in that area and want to ensure that shelters are prepared for those who may not have another place they can stay in the event of an evacuation of the spillway area."

DCFS is prepared to augment Red Cross resources with their own staff and resources as needed. ARC increased spaces available in state by 5,167 spaces (77,077 total spaces are available near areas that may experience flooding which are run by state and Red Cross entities).

RED CROSS

The Governor thanked the Red Cross for working with the state to make shelter space available in the event of an evacuation of residents for the possible opening of the Morganza Spillway.

Governor Jindal said, “We would like to encourage those people who would ordinarily show up on the day of the disaster to volunteer with the Red Cross to go to RedCross.Org today, put in your zip code and call your chapter phone number to ask for available training even before evacuations are needed. The Red Cross is strongly encouraging potential volunteers to get in touch with their local chapter now to be trained in order to prepare them for volunteering.”

DNR Update

DNR contacted 45 operators running 419 wells to make them aware of their responsibility to take precautions and protect the environment in the event of flooding.

DHH Update

DHH is working with ten hospitals that they have identified as potentially at risk. They have also been in contact with one nursing home and one hospital to evacuate in preparation for flooding.

LDWF Update

LDWF enforcement is coordinating patrols along the levees with the levee districts to keep persons off of the levees. LDWF enforcement is also meeting with State Police to coordinate evacuation plans for the basin area.

GOHSEP Update

Five additional parishes have also now declared a state of emergency in preparation for rising flood waters, including:

- Ascension

- Assumption
- East Baton Rouge
- Iberville
- West Feliciana

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